

# Summarised inspection findings

**Inverarity Primary School Nursery Class**

Angus Council

21 January 2020

## Key contextual information

Inverarity nursery class provides early learning and childcare for 13 children aged between three and five years. The early years team work with children mainly in their extensive, well-resourced outdoor area. This area includes a geodome tent within a large, enclosed natural space. Children have access to indoor playrooms, a cloakroom, kitchen and a shared gym hall. The nursery class has been part of a pilot initiative for outdoor extended provision in Angus Council. At the time of inspection, most children who attend are local to the area. A few children attend for additional hours at Inverarity, in addition to sessions within their own local setting.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The outdoor nursery class is a valued part of the school. Effective partnership working between the headteacher and early years team identifies and progresses improvements. The headteacher led consultation with children, families, practitioners and the community to create their shared vision and values. In particular, their vision of a happy, respectful learning environment is clearly evident. A few practitioners support children well to begin to link aspects of their behaviour to the aims and values. As planned, the team now need to continue to work with all children and families to keep values evident across their work.
- The team are reflective and actively involved in a wide range of self-evaluation. They appreciate the support, direction and guidance from the actively involved headteacher. Practitioners benefit from regular progress meetings and focused monitoring activities. As a result, appropriate key priorities relevant to the nursery class are identified. Practitioners have worked well together to, for example, improve their outdoor learning environment and refine changes to routines. Regular meetings, professional learning and focused visits to other settings inform their improvements. Effective joint working with colleagues from other nurseries has improved the exchange of information between settings. Practitioners now need support and guidance to build their skills and experience in how to measure the impact of improvements on children's learning.
- The school improvement plan includes measurable improvement priorities that are relevant to the nursery. The team work together to share national guidance and best practice. Practitioners reflect increasingly in more depth on their shared understanding of children's progress. Whilst the team are actively involved in implementing and progressing improvements, there is not yet a culture of distributed leadership. Practitioners now need to be empowered to identify and lead change. A few children have leadership roles in whole school groups such as the eco committee and pupil council. The views of children and families inform and influence improvements. The team should now work with children, families and the community to identify and celebrate the impact of key priorities on outcomes for children.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships between practitioners and children are consistently warm and nurturing. The team provide well-judged levels of support. As a result, children are independent and resourceful learners. Practitioners work well together in the stimulating natural environment to promote the development of children's creativity and curiosity. Children confidently select and transport materials to extend their own interests. Almost all children are highly motivated as they experiment, predict and investigate in their play. For most of the session, children demonstrate a sustained level of engagement.
- Children's interests, stage of development and individual preferences are understood well by the team. Practitioners use this understanding to inform experiences and interactions that are child-led and are centred on children's interests. Most practitioners make good use of commentary, open-ended and a few higher order questions. The team now need to use strategies to deepen and sustain thinking more consistently across all areas of the learning environment. The well-resourced outdoor area provides a wide variety of opportunities for children to identify and solve problems. Children's interests, for example in science, now need to build more effectively on children's prior learning and skills. The language of learning now needs to be given a higher profile throughout play experiences.
- Digital technology supports children to record and share their experiences. The team should now ensure digital learning supports children to extend and develop further their learning.
- Practitioners understand children's capabilities, interests and individual personalities well. They regularly observe children as they interact with them during play. Floor books document children's experiences and interests over time. Detailed observations including photographs from nursery and home are recorded in children's folders. Their learning stories are shared regularly with parents. Comments shared between parents, children and practitioners build a holistic picture of interests, experiences and talents at home and nursery. The team should continue their work to ensure all observations are focused on significant learning for individual children. The team recognise that most next steps are not yet focused on significant learning for individual children.

- The cycle of assessment, planning, tracking and monitoring shows positive signs of becoming more connected. The team have worked well together to improve approaches to planning to ensure it is responsive to children's interests. Their planning ensures a good range and variety of experiences across the curriculum. There is not yet a shared approach to assessment to identify and build on prior learning effectively. Progress meetings are helping support keyworkers to identify opportunities to challenge children. Appropriate plans, strategies and targets are developed in partnership with parents for individual children who require additional support with specific short or long-term issues. Practitioners now need to engage all children in more frequent conversations about their progress in learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- see choice QI.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners offer a range of opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and the wider experiences of the nursery. Most families are actively involved in the work of the nursery class. Parents regularly share their feedback and suggestions with the team through daily conversations, regular feedback and attending events, such as the café sessions. The team should now increase the range of accessible methods they use to inform and engage with parents about their child's learning.
- The team make good use of local partners to support and extend children's learning. Recent use of the library van, trips to a local farm and popular visits from the police enhance children's learning. A few parents share their skills as they lead sessions with children in understanding and sharing their feelings. Parents help with trips to local farms, fundraising events such as the Macmillan café and donate items and make improvements to the garden.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Relationships between children and practitioners are positive, responsive and trusting. Children are respected and valued for their own unique skills and personalities. As a result, children are confident, respectful and purposeful throughout their time at nursery. All practitioners demonstrate a very good understanding of the principles of nurture that underpin their work. The team use information from families very well to respond sensitively to children's needs and behaviour.
- Children thrive on the freedom, possibilities and challenges of engaging with the natural environment. They laugh with delight as they jump in huge puddles or dig together to create a dam. They develop confidence and resilience as they balance on and explore interesting structures. Practitioners are confident and observant as they support children to assess risks and benefits throughout their play. As planned, the team should now develop further their skills in supporting children to use a wider range of real tools and cook outdoors. Almost all children make very good progress in developing their gross motor skills as they transport resources, roll down slopes and navigate uneven ground. As identified by practitioners through self-evaluation, most children would now benefit from increased planned opportunities to develop their fine motor skills.
- Strong, positive attachments are evident between practitioners and children. Children feel secure as they receive reassurance and support to settle into their day. There is a very good sense of community as children lead their sociable welcome time. Children new to the setting receive well-judged support to develop friendships and get to know all adults. The language of wellbeing is referred to frequently throughout children's learning. This means children are beginning to become familiar with the national wellbeing indicators. Practitioners role model positive behaviours and assist children to talk through and resolve conflicts together. Almost all children are able to share space, resources and cooperate well as they play. As planned, the team now need to ensure their work to develop health and wellbeing involves children and parents in identifying and celebrating their skills.
- Children are actively involved in directing and adapting their own learning. They make real, important choices throughout their session. Almost all children demonstrate confidence in their environment as they create resources such as a rocket ship made from tarp and tyres. They frequently transport open-ended materials between play areas to extend their play. All children are active participants; their opinion is valued through leadership roles and important responsibilities. The team should now ensure all experiences maximise opportunities for independence and responsibility to develop further children's skills.



- The whole team work well together to ensure statutory duties are fulfilled. A range of effective monitoring activities ensures the team implement procedures well. A good range of professional learning opportunities ensures all practitioners are up to date with their responsibilities.
- There is an inclusive approach and children are treated equally. The team work well together to ensure all children have the support they need to learn and develop. All children are valued equally. The team should now explore how to extend and develop children's understanding of fairness and rights in a way that is meaningful to young children.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

very good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Almost all children make very good progress in communication and early language. Children frequently share their ideas and thoughts in detail in extended conversations. Most children can use a wide range of descriptive vocabulary when looking closely at worms and bugs. Almost all children listen well to instructions and one another during a group music session or when playing a matching game. Almost all children are developing a good awareness of rhyme and enjoying playing with the sounds and patterns of language. Most children are beginning to recognise a wide range of letters and identify initial sounds. A few children recognise their own and their friend's names and familiar words as they complete the daily register. Most children show a keen interest in books and listen attentively to daily stories. Children mark make as they write shopping lists and signs in the geodome. As planned, children now need to become more experienced in applying their early literacy skills.
- In numeracy and mathematics, almost all children are making very good progress. Almost all children count forwards and backwards frequently in their play. Children estimate, count and record numbers in everyday routines. A few children use measuring tapes to compare lengths of materials used to construct a rocket station using wood. Most children explore volume as they create potions in their new science lab. A group of children estimate and measure as they work together to make playdough. A few children are beginning to add and subtract in simple operations. A few children are now ready develop further a broader range of early numeracy skills.
- Almost all children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Children demonstrate very positive relationships with one another, adults and children across the school. Almost all children have a very good understanding of how to keep their bodies healthy as they plan, cook and share substantial healthy snacks and lunches. All children demonstrate a very good understanding of the natural environment. They can explain in detail how they have cared for and grown a range of vegetables in their garden. Children use small tools very well, as they cut fruit for snack, saw wood to create bows or are supported to use small hammers safely.

- Overall, children are confident, successful learners and are proud of their achievements in their play and at home. A wide range of responsibilities empowers children to respect and improve their setting. Children are joyful as they paint, draw, dance and sing throughout their day. Individuals and groups use their imagination in imaginative play in the geodome and large covered sand area. Children now need to recognise and share their successes and skills more frequently.
- Children who require additional or specific support are identified promptly. There is effective partnership working between parents, practitioners, other settings and colleagues from other agencies. Good communication and personalised support plans mean children with specific needs make very good progress with their behaviour, development or learning needs. The team should now monitor formally the impact of agreed strategies on children's progress

## Choice of QI : 2.2 Curriculum

- Rationale and design
- Learning and developmental pathways
- Pedagogy and play
- Skills for life and learning

- The team demonstrate a commitment to, and understanding of, a responsive, play-based approach. Their practice is informed by a shared view of children as capable, independent learners. The curriculum is varied and offers challenge and breadth. It is responsive to children's interests and needs. The team have successfully established a rich and interesting outdoor learning environment. A draft curriculum rationale and play policy has been shared with parents.
- When children and families first start nursery, the transition arrangements are flexible and tailored to meet the needs of children and families. Individual children are well supported to settle in to the session at their own pace. When moving from nursery into primary school, a planned programme of pastoral support helps children and families to feel positive and confident. A few opportunities to learn together with children in the school are planned across the year. This supports children to develop positive relationships with staff and children. Practitioners must now extend their working with colleagues in the school to ensure their curriculum reflects a shared understanding of pedagogy across the early level.
- Health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy opportunities are embedded effectively throughout children's play. The curriculum responds promptly to children's interests. A focus over time on improving the availability and use of open-ended materials has enriched the curriculum. Child-led experiences offer children very good opportunities to develop their imagination, problem-solving and inquiry skills. The team should continue to develop further how to plan to extend and deepen learning and interests. Practitioners make good use of parents and partners to enrich learning, for example, in sharing their skills and beginning to promote the world of work. The team should now support children to make more explicit links between their own experiences, and their specific skills for life and learning.
- Children benefit from the fresh air, freedom and challenge of the natural outdoor environment. Real-life experiences and high-quality resources support children to work well together and develop well their skills for life and learning. The team should now extend their planned work with partners to support children to identify, apply and develop further their skills in new contexts.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.